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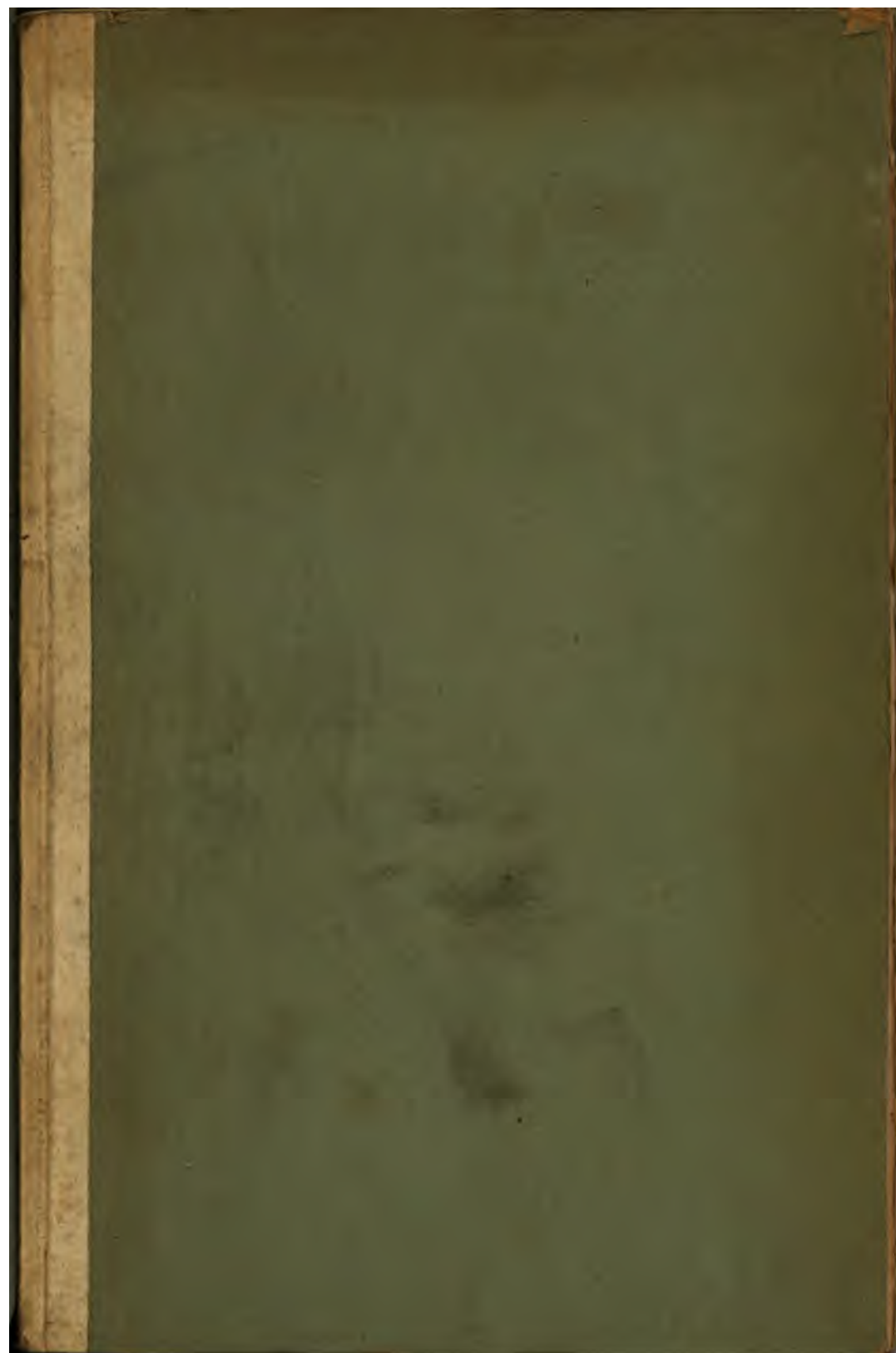
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THE  
HINDU THEIST'S BROTHERLY GIFT  
TO ENGLISH THEISTS,

BEING

AN ESSAY ON THEISM AND THE BEST  
METHOD OF PROPAGATING IT,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

THEISTIC SELECTIONS FROM THE BIBLE.

BY

RAJ NARAIN BOSE,

PRESIDENT OF THE ADI BRAHMO SAMAJ.

PART I.

“स्यं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् ।

उदारचरित्वातां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥”

“This man is my kinsman and that man a stranger; so think the narrow-minded; but to men of large heart the whole world is one family.”

HITOPADESA.



LONDON:

WILLIAMS AND NORRIS,  
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C., AND  
20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.

CALCUTTA:

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## Dedication.

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TO

THE UNITARIANS OF ENGLAND,

WHOSE CHURCH IS GROWING FROM WITHIN,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY AFFORD THEM SOME AID,

HOWEVER FEEBLE,

IN GIVING A CHARACTER TO THEIR CHURCH

MORE CONSONANT TO THE SPIRIT OF THEISM

TO WHICH IT IS TENDING,

AND IN THE ADOPTION OF WHICH THAT TENDENCY MUST

INEVITABLY TERMINATE.



## ESSAY ON THEISM AND THE BEST MODE OF PROPAGATING IT.

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**THEISM**, or, as its name implies, the Religion of the One God, is the highest developed and the truest form of religion, admitting of progress in the scientific and poetical exposition of its doctrines and their application to the manifold concerns of life.

As Theism is the highest developed and the truest form of religion, I should first define what religion is before describing Theism. Religion is the consciousness of a Perfect Being, opposite to imperfect man, of our absolute dependence on that Being, and of the existence of a state of Perfect Happiness opposite to our imperfect existence here on earth. Nothing can repress man's yearning after and belief in the Perfect—the some Being possessing a nature opposite to his imperfect nature, the some state, opposite to his imperfect terrestrial state. A yearning arises in his mind for a Perfect Being and for a Perfect State of Existence. This yearning is invariably accompanied by a belief in its object. This belief and this yearning constitute the essential elements of religion. “There is but one religion,” says Parker, “as there is one ocean.” This remark

is quite correct. The truths of religion are few in number and exceedingly simple. They are the following :—

1st.—That all things absolutely depend on an Absolute Being, that is, a Being who is the Being of Beings, the Eternal Ground of all existences, perfect in every respect.

2nd.—That God is closely related to man and takes personal interest in him. He reveals religious truths to him and grants his prayers.

3rd.—That man's will is free, and that he is responsible to God for his acts.

4th.—That God is to be worshipped in the best manner possible.

5th.—That there is a future state of existence, that there is distribution of rewards and punishments in that state, and that perfect happiness is to be found in it.

The above truths are invariably believed by all mankind.

All men believe that there is a Perfect Being. The polytheist believes in many Gods, but he either believes that there is one Supreme Perfect God, to whom all the other Gods are subordinate, or that, though the Gods individually are imperfect, Divine Power in general is perfect.

All men believe that all things depend upon the Divine Power. The polytheist believes that all things depend upon the Gods; the monotheist believes that all things depend upon the One God. All men believe that all things absolutely depend

upon the Divine Power. The polytheist simply believes that the something divine is the active power of the universe; it makes the sun shine, the wind blow, and the fire burn. He has no higher ideas of absolute dependence, but he still has a conviction in his mind that all things absolutely depend upon the Gods. This vague sense of absolute dependence is expressed in his hymns and prayers. The enlightened monotheist believes that all things depend so much on the One True God, that if He separate Himself from the universe, it will be reduced to nothing.

All men believe that God is perfect, though they differ in their ideas of perfection. The most degraded polytheist believes that the possession of a huge misshapen body, and dominion over the forest in which he lives, constitutes perfection. He has no higher ideas of perfection. The enlightened monotheist believes that formlessness, omnipresence, eternal existence, the possession of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, and dominion over the whole universe, constitute perfection. Each ascribes his idea of perfection to the Divine.

All men believe that God is closely related to man and takes personal interest in him. They believe that He reveals religious truths to man, and that He grants his prayers.

All men believe that God should be worshipped in the best manner possible. The followers of inferior religions believe that the best mode of worshipping God is to offer Him flowers and in-

cense; and those of superior religions believe that the best mode of worshipping Him is to love Him and all mankind, and do the works He loves.

All men have a consciousness that their will is free, and that they are responsible to God for their acts.

All men believe that there is a future state of existence; that there is a distribution of rewards and punishments in that state; and that perfect happiness, not obtainable in the present state, can be attained hereafter. The ignorant savage believes that there is a place beyond the cloud-topped hill where he will go after death and enjoy perfect sensual bliss in company with his dog. The enlightened religionist believes that he will enjoy perfect spiritual felicity in a future state resulting from constant communion with his beloved God.

It is therefore evident that the fundamental truths of religion mentioned before are universally believed in by all mankind. Notwithstanding the mutations in opinion that are taking place on account of progress in civilization, man cannot shake off the above beliefs; they are fixed in his nature, and the cognition of them as truths are inseparable from his spiritual constitution. The reason that they are so is that they are known by man by means of intuition, or the easiest sort of inference.

The human mind has a capacity of knowing objects that cannot be perceived by the senses, as it has of knowing such as can be perceived by them. It has a capacity of knowing hyperphysical as well as physical objects. Myself am not my

hands, or my ears, or my nose, or my head, or any part of myself which I can perceive with the senses ; but I am something which I cannot perceive with them. My friend is not his hands, or his ears, or his head, or any part of him which I can perceive with the senses, but something which I cannot perceive with them. As I know myself or my friend, so I know God. Myself, my friend, and my God, are hyperphysical realities. Hyperphysical existences are as much objects of knowledge as physical ones. Intuition and inference enable us to know hyperphysical objects as well as physical objects. If we can trust the mind's capacity of knowing physical objects, there is no possible reason to distrust his capacity of knowing hyperphysical objects.

With the above prefatory observations, I proceed to shew that the fundamental truths of religion are known by man by means of intuition or the easiest sort of inference.

Man cannot but believe in a First Cause of all things. As he intuitively believes in an external world, and in the existence of a soul, so he intuitively believes in a First Cause upon whom external world and soul depend. As the truths that the external world exists and that soul exists require no logical demonstration, so the truth that the something exists upon which the external world and soul depend, requires no logical demonstration.

As in the case of the external world and the soul the conviction is irresistible that they are imperfect,



so in the case of the Being upon whom both the external world and the soul depend, the conviction is irresistible that He is perfect, and that perfection among other attributes must include perfect intelligence. The Being upon whom both external world and soul depend must be a perfectly intelligent Being.

As it requires no demonstration to prove that we depend on other beings than God, so it does not require any logical demonstration to prove that we depend upon God. As it does not require any demonstration to prove that we depend in a comparative degree on other beings, so it does not require any demonstration to prove that we depend absolutely on the Perfect Being. As in the case of our dependence on other beings than God, the sense that such dependence is comparative is irresistible, so in the case of God, the sense that our dependence on Him is absolute is irresistible.

As it does not require any logical demonstration to prove that other intelligent beings, such as our teachers or governors, communicate instruction to us or grant our prayers, so it does not require any logical demonstration to prove that the Perfectly Intelligent Being communicates religious truths to us and grants our prayers.

It does not require any logical demonstration to prove that the Being upon whom we absolutely depend is to be worshipped, and His favor gained for the attainment of perfect happiness.

That our will is free requires also no demonstration; it is a simple fact of consciousness. We

can change our will as often as we like, and act accordingly. This makes us conscious that we are free, and responsible to God for our acts.

Our consciousness tells us that what we call "I," or in other words the soul, is distinct from the body. The easiest inference from this fact of consciousness is, that the soul does not perish with the body, and that there is a future state of existence.

The moral sense, implanted by God in the human breast, leads man to infer that He approves of virtue and disapproves of vice, and that He will reward virtue and punish vice in a future state of existence.

As there is a natural provision for the gratification of every want of ours, such as food for the gratification of hunger, water for the gratification of thirst, etc., so there must be a natural provision for the gratification of our desire for perfect happiness. But as perfect happiness cannot be found on earth, the easiest inference from this fact is that it is to be obtained in a future state of existence.

As there is no difference of opinion between the Theist and the followers of other religions about the forementioned fundamental truths of religion, I shall not, for the satisfaction of a few sceptics and semi-sceptics, who happen to differ from the generality of mankind, enter here into the philosophy of the subject and attempt to show, as I have done in my work the *Dharmatattwadipika*, or the "Lamp of Religious Knowledge," that they are as much deserving of our belief, as much positive, as the truths

of physical science, or those truths a belief in which is implied by the daily actions of life, which the sceptic as much as the Theist must perform. I therefore hasten to the doctrines that Theism establishes upon these fundamental truths. These doctrines are so consonant to reason that there is agreement also between most men and the Theist in a belief in most of them.

The doctrine which Theism establishes on the truth that God is perfect is that He is one only, without a second, formless, eternal, omnipresent and endowed with infinite power, wisdom and goodness. If God have an equal or superior, He cannot be a perfect being. We cannot therefore say that God has an equal or superior. If He have a form He must be a limited being. We cannot therefore say that God has a form. Since He is a perfect being He must have power, wisdom, and goodness, for without these attributes, there can be no perfection. Since He is a perfect Being He must be endowed with these attributes in an infinite degree, that is with infinite power, wisdom and goodness, as finite power, wisdom and goodness do not constitute perfection.

The doctrine which Theism establishes on the truth that God is closely related to man and takes personal interest in him is that He is our Father, Mother, Friend and Saviour. It says that man as the son of God has free access to Him and that He requires no mediator to assist him in obtaining God. Another man cannot give him any more assistance

than what can be expected from an elder brother in obtaining God.

The doctrine which Theism establishes on the truth that God reveals religious truth to man is that He reveals such truths to all mankind and not to particular men. Theism says that as there is a natural provision for all mankind for the gratification of every other want, so there is a natural provision for all mankind for the gratification of their spiritual wants. God reveals religious truths to all men. We must test external revelation by internal revelation. If a man, through superior knowledge, work what appear to us to be miracles, and if he instruct us to lie and steal, we cannot accept him as the medium through whom God reveals religious truths to us. It is, therefore, evident that external revelation is superfluous, and that our internal consciousness is the only medium through which God reveals religious truths to all mankind. This revelation is not confined to a particular man or men, but is made by the all-merciful God to all men more or less according to the religious capacity of each.

The doctrine which Theism establishes on the truth that God grants the prayers of man is that He grants those prayers of ours which He thinks proper to grant, and does not grant those which He thinks improper to grant, but He invariably grants those which are for spiritual gifts.

The doctrine which Theism establishes on the truth that there is a distribution of rewards and punish-

ments in a future state of existence is that that reward is not sensual bliss, and that punishment is not bodily chastisement. The reward consists in self-satisfaction arising from conscious virtue, and the punishment in remorse for past sins. Punishment instead of being vindictive is remedial. God punishes us, not with a view of taking revenge upon us for having dishonoured Him by disobeying His commandments, but to set us free from sin. Punishment cannot be eternal. The justice of God leads us to think that He will not award us infinite punishment for finite sin. The mercy of God also leads us to think that He will not award us infinite punishment for finite sin. The soul, after being punished for its sins, will be again put in the way of self-improvement and the attainment of happiness.

The doctrine which Theism establishes on the truth that there is a state of perfect happiness in a future state of existence is that that state of existence cannot be called perfect which is not progressive and does not admit of new scenes of felicity opening on the soul. The progressive character of the world leads us also to think that the soul will go on progressing and progressing through eternity, ever approaching God, but never reaching Him. The soul's progress will consist in the ever-increasing character of its knowledge and love of God. The doctrines of Theism can be summed up in the following formulæ :—

(1.) The Entirely Natural Origin of our Religious Knowledge.

- (2.) The Existence of God.
- (3.) The Infinity of God.
- (4.) The Fatherhood, the Motherhood, and the  
Friendhood of God.
- (5.) The Nearness of God to Man.
- (6.) The Freewill of Man.
- (7.) The Love of God and Doing the works He  
loves.
- (8.) The Existence of a Future State.
- (9.) The Distribution of Rewards and Punish-  
ments in that State.
- (10.) Satisfaction of mind arising from con-  
sciousness of virtue is Heaven, and remorse is Hell.
- (11.) The Remedial Character of Divine Punish-  
ment.
- (12.) The Eternal Progress of the Human Soul.

After showing the foundation and the truthfulness of the doctrine of Theism and embodying them in comprehensive formulæ, I now proceed to give a brief exposition of them.

God is the Creator and the Preserver of the universe. From Him all things have proceeded, and in Him do all things live. All things depend on His present will. He is omnipresent, eternal, formless, infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, and infinitely good. He is our Father, Mother, Friend, Saviour, and Redeemer. He gives us food for the subsistence of our bodies and wisdom for the nourishment of our souls, and grants those prayers of ours which He thinks it proper to grant, and not those which He thinks it improper to grant, but

invariably those which are for spiritual gifts. Man's will is free; he is responsible to God for his acts; God is to be worshipped with love. He is dearer than son, dearer than wealth, dearer than all other things. The true lover of God always does the works which He loves. The soul of man is immortal, and there is a distribution of rewards and punishments in a future state, but that punishment is remedial. Satisfaction arising from consciousness of virtue is Heaven, and remorse Hell. The soul, after being punished for its sins, is again put in the way of progress. It goes on progressing and progressing in love and knowledge of God through eternity, ever approaching but never reaching Him.

If I were to describe Theism in one word, it would be the word Love. Theism can be divided into—firstly, a belief in the love of God to His creatures; secondly, our love of God; thirdly, doing the works He loves. It was love that created the world. God wanted to diffuse happiness to other beings, and He created the world. It is God's love that still preserves the world. It is love of God to man that makes Him take personal interest in him. It is love of God to man that entitles Him to the appellations of Father and Friend. It is the love of God to man that makes Him near and easily accessible to man. It is the love of God to man that leads Him to grant his prayers and reveal religious truth to him. It is the love of God to man that leads Him to promote the progress of his soul in a

future state. It is an instinctive love of God that first draws man towards God. It is like the love of the new-born being for the honey in the flower which it has not yet tasted. It is love of God that makes him perform the works which God loves. Morality is nothing but love. What does morality say? Morality says, Love your neighbours, love your country, love the world, love the right. Love also implies knowledge. As we cannot love a friend if we do not know his merits, so if we do not know the perfections of God which constitute His loveliness, how can we love Him? If we do not know what is right, how can we love the right? Love therefore implies knowledge. All religion therefore is included in the word "love." What is leading a religious life but leading a life of love? Thinking love, speaking love, acting love, diffusing an atmosphere of love around us.

Theism is the best exponent of the fundamental truths of religion which are the common property of the whole human race. Morell concludes his treatise named "The Philosophic Tendencies of the Age," with the remark :—"The final appeal for the truth which philosophy embodies must be to the universal reason, the common consciousness of mankind." The tendency of religion also is in the same direction. Its tendency is now to reveal itself in its true character as based on the universal consciousness of mankind. Theists have been charged with making self as the standard of religious truth, but how can this charge be



properly brought against them when the universal belief of mankind is the basis of their religion? Theism is the highest developed and the truest form of religion. Each form of religion played its part of interpreting the fundamental truths of religion to mankind. Each form of religion succeeded in some degree in serving as such interpreter, and failed also in a certain degree. Theism proves to be the best interpreter of those truths. Theism as such interpreter embodies in itself the truths of all other religions, not that it has purposely sat down to construct an eclectic religion out of the old religions, but that, unconsciously fulfilling its task of being the correctest interpreter of the fundamental truths of religion, the correct interpretations given by other religions cannot but reappear in its own. As Theism contains the truths of all other religions, as it is the only true religion unmixed with errors and absurdities, and is therefore worthy of acceptance by all mankind, and as it admits the whole of humanity to a participation in its benefits, it is called the Universal Religion.

After describing the theory and practice of Theism, I now proceed to treat of its essential characteristics. These characteristics are:—

- (1.) Its truthfulness.
- (2.) Its simplicity.
- (3.) Its catholicity.
- (4.) Its spirituality.
- (5.) Its harmonious character.
- (6.) Its sublimity.

- (7.) Its sweetness.
- (8.) Its utility.
- (9.) Its humility.
- (10.) Its progressive nature.
- (11.) Its friendly demeanour towards other religions.
- (12.) Its benign but effective mode of propagation.

The first essential characteristic of Theism is its truthfulness. It does not stand on the authority of a single individual, but upon the firm rock of the common consciousness or universal reason of all mankind, the only medium through which God reveals religious truth to man. Its scripture is the creation; its teacher God. It is pure truth, not mixed with errors and absurdities as other religions of the world are. In this respect, it is the express image of Him who has been called in the Vedas the Truth of Truth—the Great Abode of Truth.

The next essential characteristic of Theism is its simplicity. Its truths fall in with the universal belief of man, and are so simple that they can be understood by men of superior as well as inferior intellects.

The next essential characteristic of Theism is its catholicity. It does not believe that truth is confined within the narrow circle of a party or sect. It believes that religious truth is to be found more or less in the scriptures of all nations and the writings of the pious men of all ages and countries. Theism does not tell us to love only our own nation,

but all mankind—only our own nation the more. It does not make any such distinction as the Greeks of old did between the Greek and the Barbarian, or as the Hindu does between the Hindu and the Mlechchha, but admits the whole of humanity to a participation of its benefits, which as the air of the heaven it imparts to all mankind. It does not believe that God loves one particular nation, or the followers of a particular religion, in exclusion of other nations or the followers of other religions, but that in every nation or religious denomination he who loves Him and does the works He loves is accepted with Him. It, however, believes that one path to God is straighter than another.

The next essential feature of Theism is its extremely spiritual character. It does not believe that a particular time or particular place is necessary for the worship of God. It believes whenever the mind is concentrated upon God, in that time and that place should He be worshipped. It believes that there is no particular place of pilgrimage upon the earth. The company of the righteous is its only place of pilgrimage. It does not believe that the offering of flowers and fruits is necessary for the worship of God. The flowers of love and adoration, and the fruits of good works, are its only offerings to God. It does not believe in the especial efficacy of rites and ceremonies. Its rites and ceremonies are actions promoting the good of mankind. Although it does not believe in the especial efficacy of rites and ceremonies, it does not

at once dispense with them. It does not believe that lawlessness is religion ; it does not believe that austerities and severe mortification of the flesh are necessary for gaining the favour of God. The restraint of the passions is its only austerity. It does not believe that hard penances are necessary for the expiation of sin. Sincere repentance is its only expiation. It acknowledges no sacrifices. Its only sacrifice is that of selfishness on the altar of divine love.

The next characteristic feature of Theism is the harmonious nature of its doctrines. Anent the subject, I repeat what I have said elsewhere:--\*

“Theism is the religion of harmony. It is neither a religion of frenzy on the one hand, nor a religion of dull quietism on the other. It is neither a religion of faith at the expense of works on the one hand, nor a religion of works at the expense of faith on the other. It is neither a religion of meditation at the expense of action on the one hand, nor a religion of action at the expense of meditation on the other. It is neither a religion of asceticism on the one hand, nor a religion of worldliness on the other. It is neither a religion of hard penance and bodily mortification on the one hand, nor a religion of voluptuous ease on the other. It is neither a religion of pure knowledge or reason on the one hand, nor a religion of blind unregulated faith on the other. It is neither a religion of forms and ceremonies on the one hand, nor a religion of unfettered license without any forms at all on the

\* “Brahmic Advice, Caution and Help.”

other. It is neither a religion teaching men to depend only upon divine grace on the one hand, nor a religion instructing them to rely upon self-exertion only for the attainment of eternal bliss on the other. It is neither a religion inculcating undue reverence to religious teachers on the one hand, nor a religion teaching total want of the same on the other. It considers religious blessedness to consist in a harmonious operation of all our faculties, and the harmonious discharge of all our duties. It does not consider any quality, faculty, feeling, passion, or appetite given by God to us as unnecessary, but maintains that it requires only proper regulation to subserve the temporal and eternal interests of man. From divine communion, down to the practice of common prudence and the enjoyment of innocent recreation, it considers the exercise of every human faculty under proper regulation, and a harmonious discharge of all our duties, duly subordinated for the sake of harmony itself, to be true religion. This law of harmony is the test by which we should examine whether any religious doctrine really agrees with Theism. Any doctrine or practice that cannot stand this test should be rejected as untheistic."

The next essential characteristic of Theism is the sublimity of its doctrines. What can be more sublime, more lofty, more transcendental than the ideas of God entertained by Theism? In nothing does this so appear as in the idea entertained by it of God's having neither body nor mind. By the word "mind" here is meant a mind like ours.

The next essential characteristic of Theism is its sweetness. Its peculiar sweetness arises, firstly, from its making the love of God the be-all and the end-all of all religion; secondly, its connecting spirit; and thirdly, its ideas of God's mercy and justice. It makes the love of God the be-all and the end-all of religion. Christ, or rather the Hebrew prophets before him, said, "Love thy God with all thy mind and all thy heart and all thy strength." And "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Here the Bible makes self the standard of our loving others. But Theism makes our love of God the principle from which should flow our love to others. In this respect as in all others, it is superior to Christianity and other religions. It is this complete pervasion of Theism by the spirit of divine love which makes it so peculiarly sweet. Its connecting spirit also communicates such sweetness to it. It makes God near to man, and man near to man. It believes that God loves man as a father his child, and is as easily accessible. It considers all men as brethren, as sons of the same Father. With its progress, narrow national feeling will disappear, though of course, nationalities will remain. Man will become brother to man all over the world. The following lines of Tennyson very well express the connecting spirit of Theism :

"For so the whole round earth is, every way,  
Bound by gold chains about the foot of God."

The next cause of the peculiar sweetness of Theism is its reconciliation of divine mercy with divine

justice. The Christian and Mahomedan religions say that sinners will be eternally shut up in hell, but Theism tells us that sinners, after being punished for their sins, are again put in the way of progress. It is this realization of the Father's all-mercifulness which, in addition to other causes, makes Theism so particularly sweet in its nature.

The next essential feature of Theism is its utility, taking the word even in its strict Benthamite sense. If Theism prevail in the earth, evil customs and institutions will disappear from it. Theism requires the harmonious development of the whole man, and this would necessitate the adoption of an effective system of education causing such development; and what blessings can we not expect from the universal adoption of such a system of education? The prevalence of Theism will diffuse love among the different nations of the earth and abolish war from the world.

The next essential characteristic of Theism is its humility. With regard to its humility towards man it is worthy of remark that it does not pretend to know more than what all men know. Its mode of illustration and explanation of the truths of religion known by all men is of course superior to all other religions prevailing in the earth, but substantially it does not pretend to know more than what is revealed to all mankind by God. In this point of humility, it is superior to all other religions of the earth. With regard to its humility toward God, it is to be observed that it does not pretend to penetrate into

His mysteries. He has thrown a screen before our spiritual vision. What is outside the screen, we can know. What is behind the screen, we cannot know. It is sacrilegious on our part to try to lift up the screen, and to know what is behind it. We think we succeed in lifting up the screen, but in reality we cannot do so. The consequences of such presumption are error, self-contradiction and confusion. What is necessary for our salvation, God has given us to know. What is unnecessary for our salvation, He has not given us to know. Perhaps it is good for us that we should not know more. Had we seen the ineffable majesty and glory of God in all its fulness, we would have been, like Semele in the Grecian fable, reduced to ashes. Had we seen more vividly the happiness to be enjoyed in a future state of existence, we would have been at once disgusted with the present life and become completely unfit for worldly business.

The next essential characteristic of Theism is its progressive character. Of course there can be no progress in such doctrines as that God is infinite, or that the best worship of Him is to love Him and do the works He loves. But what I mean to say is, that there will be progress in the scientific and poetical exposition of its doctrines, and their application to the manifold concerns of life. F. W. Newman says:—"When religion shall become a science, differences of opinion will become less." Now, there are great differences of opinion prevailing among mankind about the proper interpretation



of the fundamental truths of religion, which are the common property of the whole human race. But when these truths shall be scientifically and systematically explained, such difference will become less. I have shown in this essay how there are axioms in religion as in other branches of knowledge, and how a system of truths can be deduced from those axioms. But the actual construction of a science of religion—of this Organon of Organons—must be left to a future religious genius, for whom we are but humbly paving the way. We can reasonably expect the rise of a Newton of religion at some future period. The especial recommendation of Theism will be that it will satisfy the intelligent and the learned portion of mankind by its scientific character, and the mass of the people by the simplicity and sweetness of its doctrines. This scientific exposition of its doctrines will highly conduce to its advantage. There will also be progress in the poetical exposition of them. Poets and preachers will hereafter appear who will have the inspirational more than the scientific element in them, and illustrate the doctrines of Theism with increasing beauty and felicity. There will also be progress in their application to the manifold concerns of life. If the doctrines of Theism be practically applied to all concerns of life, society will wear a completely different aspect from what it does now. But that progress should be gradual. We should not overturn society in order to improve it.

The next characteristic feature of Theism is its

friendly demeanour towards other religions. As its truths are substantially the same with what is believed in by all mankind, it does not at all bear a hostile attitude to other religions. It believes that every form of religion contains some truth in it, and breathes more or less of divine love. No religion could have prevailed in the world if it had not contained some truth in it. What the Persian poet says, speaking of believers and unbelievers in Mahomedanism, is quite correct :—"Discourse between the believer and the unbeliever at last terminates in one place." The Sanscrit poet also says, with great beauty and felicity :—"Thou, O God, art the one and the ultimate goal which all men reach, following diverse paths, straight or devious, according to their different tastes and inclinations, as rivers find the sea." Every religion also breathes of divine love. I cannot better express this sentiment than by the following line of another Persian poet, the lyric poet of Shiraz :—"Every place is the place of divine love, whether a mosque or a church." Every religion has some truth in it, but Theism is the truest of all. Every religion breathes of divine love, but Theism does so most of all. Theism has come to fulfil the old religions, and not to destroy them. It has come as a friend and not as an enemy to the old religions. The true Theist, far from hating, actually loves the pious of all religious denominations. He considers that the more a Christian or a Mahomedan has the spirit of charity and divine love in him the more he is a

Theist. He considers the pious and virtuous idolater to be nearer to him than the Theist who leads a loose, prayerless life. He heartily echoes the prayer of F. W. Newman:—

“Lord! enable us to discern and love Thy servants, under whatever strange name or false creed they may be hidden.”

After describing the doctrines and chief characteristics of Theism, I now proceed to treat of the best means of propagating it among the several nations of the world, but before doing so, I think it proper to make the following preliminary observations.

In a previous portion of this Essay, I have summed up the doctrines of Theism in the following comprehensive formulas.

(1.) The Entirely Natural Origin of our religious knowledge.

(2.) The Existence of God.

(3.) The Infinity of God.

(4.) The Fatherhood, the Motherhood, and the Friendship of God.

(5.) The Nearness of God to man.

(6.) The Free Will of man.

(7.) The Love of God and doing the works He loves.

(8.) The Existence of a Future State.

(9.) The Distribution of Rewards and Punishments in that state.

(10.) Satisfaction of Mind, arising from consciousness of virtue, is Heaven, and remorse Hell.

(11.) The Remedial Character of Divine Punishment.

(12.) The Eternal Progress of the Human Soul.

Although these doctrines constitute what is ordinarily called Theism, we cannot but reckon that man to be a Theist who holds negatively that there is no revelation ; no prophets or particular individuals especially inspired by God ; no incarnations of God ; no images of Him, and no Gods or Goddesses whose images are to be worshipped by man ; and, positively, that God is incorporeal and infinite ; that man's will is free, that the worship of God is to love Him and do the works He loves ; that there is a future state ; that God is the rewarder of virtue and punisher of vice. Theism is gradually expected to diffuse itself through the world for the reason that men are getting discontented with the old religions which profess to be revelations from God, but must still have a religion, as they cannot remain satisfied with scepticism on the one hand, or a barren intellectual Deism on the other. But as Theism diffuses itself, we cannot expect that there will not be differences of opinion among Theists, on non-essential points especially, when the authority of revelation is not believed in. When men cannot avoid splitting themselves into sects, even when they believe in a revelation, such divisions are more probable when the authority of revelation is at once cast aside. For instance, some men may believe in other doctrines than the cardinal ones mentioned above, and hold them

along with those cardinal doctrines; while others may not believe in them. Some Theists may have a little partiality towards one of the prevailing religions, very naturally for the religion in which they had been born and brought up; while others may have no such bias. Some Theists may not hesitate to call themselves followers of the old religion, for the reason that Theism is in fact the old religion, but improved in nature and form in the course of natural development in the country in which it prevails; while other Theists would choose to call it entirely a new religion different from the old religions. Some Theists may be Conservatives and others Radicals with respect to social reformation. The Theists of one nation may not choose to intermarry with those of another, or even with those of their own nation who are of inferior social standing to them, while others would not hesitate to do so. But in spite of such differences of opinion, they should all be considered as Theists, as followers of one religion, and as such, brothers in the religious, if not, in certain cases, in the social sense of the term. There should be full toleration of each other's opinions in the matter of non-essentials, if there be unanimity in essentials.

We feel necessitated to make the above observations by way of preface to the following remarks on the best means of propagating Theism in order to prevent misconception of our individual views on that subject.

Every religion has some truth in it. Theism,

somewhat like St. Paul in his address to the Athenians, bases its appeal to a nation on that truth. It adopts a natural mode of propagation. It adopts the national name of God, national texts for discourses, and sermons extracted from the national scriptures, and the national mode of worshipping God, as well as national rites and ceremonies, and national customs, as far as they can be retained consistently with the dictates of reason and conscience, and the requirements of progressing civilization. What is deficient in the national spiritual store, it of course supplies by borrowing from other nations, but it takes care to give a national shape to what it borrows, as far as practicable. Although it expresses sympathy with the Theists of other nations, and encourages them to exert their utmost to propagate Theism among their respective nations, it exhorts them to maintain strictly the national aspect of their propagandistic policy, and not jumble up the form of propagation suited to one nation with that suited to another.

Agreeably to the above plan, the Theists of every nation should prepare forms of Church Service containing Theistic prayers taken from the national Scriptures, as well as such prayers as are entirely new; a Book of Theistic texts containing selections from the national Scriptures only; and a Ritual containing as much of the old forms of such indispensable ceremonies—*e.g.*, marriage—as could be kept consistently with the dictates of conscience; such Service, Ritual and Text-book being, of course, en-

tirely of an un-idolatrous character, avoiding the taking of the name of any prophet or religious teacher conjointly with that of the One True God as mediator between Him and man in any sense of the word.

Of these three things—Church Service, Book of Theistic Texts and Ritual, the author, with a view to aid his English Theistic brethren in the compilation of a book of Theistic texts, gives, as a sort of Appendix to this work, Theistic selections from the Bible, by way of specimen only how the Theistic texts spoken of above are to be compiled, leaving the actual compilation of a Theistic text-book to them. He would also have given specimens of forms of Church Service and Ritual; but as he is ignorant of their actual requirements in this case he has not ventured to do so. As far as he can judge, the form of Church Service adopted by the Rev. Charles Voysey seems to be an excellent model for English Theists.

It is brotherly feeling only that has led the writer, who is a foreigner, to offer this book to English Theists and Unitarians, in the hope that it may afford them some aid, however feeble, in accomplishing the Theistic reformation of their country. He hopes they will appreciate the above feeling, and kindly accept the gift in the spirit in which it is offered.





